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IN CHRIST'S NAME

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA



# IN CHRIST'S NAME

## Four Addresses

DELIVERED TO CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION  
IN THE CHAPEL OF FULHAM PALACE

Advent, 1907

BY

F. HOMES DUDDEN, D.D.

FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD  
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON

WITH PREFACE

BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA

1908

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## PREFACE

WHEN I heard these excellent addresses, so carefully prepared, delivered very impressively to the candidates for the Advent Ordination, I thought that it would be a great pity if they did not reach a wider audience, and I asked the author to be good enough to have them printed, and this was also the strong wish of the candidates.

I think that those who read this little book will feel that I was right.

They will find in the first address a beautiful description of the "Person of Christ," and will agree, I hope, after following the author's study of that Person, with his concluding words on page 18 :—

"At the end of our critical examination of those Gospels, when we contemplate the wondrous Personality that is mirrored there, we feel that the richest terms of human value are far too poor to yield an adequate interpretation, and, amazed and overpowered by our sense of the unutterable, we are forced to take up as our own the exclamation of St. Thomas—'My Lord and my God.'"

In the second address the author brings home very clearly what is meant by the Kingdom or *Kingship* of God. God ruling all human souls—the ideal is clear and most inspiring. After quoting the language of Scripture, he says (pp. 29–30):—

“There is much in such language that is beyond our comprehension. Yet amid the mysterious details we seem to grasp a truth—that some day God will come to men in a unique and final way, not partially or for a moment, but to abide with them fully for ever. With display of miraculous might He will enter human life. He will supply its deficiencies. He will increase its sufficiencies. He will take away its sin. He will endow it with supernatural gifts and powers and energies. He will transform it for His own. And then with God’s will governing all human wills, and God’s love calling out all human love, and God’s thought shaping every human thought, the ideal of our Lord will be realised, and the Kingdom of God, in its final perfection, will come.”

The third address enlarges upon what is involved in the *Fatherhood* of God, and often as this has been described, I think it has seldom been better described than on page 48:—

“We must converse with our Father, bring to Him all our difficulties, ask Him for what we need, and be sure that His parental love will send the fitting answer. So in this way all our life should be one long, blessed intercourse, through the Saviour, with our Father. And it

is just this intimacy, this interchange of love with love, that is the soul of religion. When duty is done with joy, when prayer becomes communion, when law is recognised as our Father's voice, and character as likeness to our Father's goodness, and existence itself as a partaking of our Father's being—when we live and feel and act as the real children of our Father—then, as the phrase goes, we have got religion."

In the fourth address the reader will find a thoughtful analysis of our Lord's method of teaching with its five characteristics—*popular*, *practical*, *positive*, *pregnant*, and *personal*, and each characteristic is abundantly illustrated by examples.

I am glad, therefore, to commend the addresses to the Church at large. I believe that they will be found stimulating to the spiritual life and inspiring to the work of many besides those who first heard them.

A. F. LONDON





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# IN CHRIST'S NAME

FIRST ADDRESS

## THE PERSON OF CHRIST

WHEN one whose work lies mainly among books at Oxford is bidden to come and speak to men who are girding themselves for practical work in London, he asks himself with some anxiety what may be the message that he is summoned to deliver.

You have reached a moment in your lives of the greatest seriousness. The Bishop and his Chaplains, indeed the whole body of the faithful, watch with you to-night in sympathy and prayer. For you are gathered now to make your final preparations, before you stand out in Christ's name to confront the evil and the misery of London.

Of the evil and the misery of London I am not by personal experience qualified to speak. But my work has led me recently to ponder a great deal on the significance of that expression "in Christ's

name." I propose, therefore, to take it as the general title of my four addresses ; and I invite you, on the threshold of your ordained life, to meditate with me on certain points connected with the Personality and teaching of the Master whom you serve. The first of these addresses will be concerned with the Person of Christ, the second and third with the Ideal which Christ sets before us, and the last with the Methods of Christ as Teacher.

My subject this evening, then, is the Person of our Lord. And I will begin by quoting to you some words of wisdom, extracted from an essay of a Cambridge scholar. "The relation of Jesus Christ to Christianity," he writes, "differs entirely from that of all other founders towards the religions or philosophies which bear their names. Platonism, for example, may be defined as a method of philosophic thought derived from Plato ; Mohammedanism, as the belief in a revelation vouchsafed to Mohammed ; Buddhism, as the following of principles enunciated by Buddha. But Christianity is in essence adherence to the Person of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> These words seem to me exactly to hit off the great distinctive feature of the religion that we profess.

<sup>1</sup> F. J. Foakes-Jackson in *Cambridge Theological Essays* p. 474.



The central fact of this religion is a Person. The deep reality which underlies alike its doctrine and its practice is a Life. The Gospel is emphatically the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To discover God in Jesus, to know ourselves in Jesus, to see in Him the Light of the world in which we are, to find in Him the Way to the world to which we go—this it is to be a Christian. And to bring the Christ to others, and others to the Christ, is the foremost task and highest privilege of the Christian ministry.

This view of our religion, moreover, is the only one that can be justified historically. Carry your minds back to the earliest beginnings amid the hills and fields and by the lake of Galilee. Our Lord is standing there, and offering His disciples—what? Not primarily a doctrine, not primarily a method of living: just Himself. “Come unto me,” He says. “Learn of me. Follow me.” That is the beginning. Christian dogma, and Christian ethic, and Christian institutions are historically the consequences of the original acceptance of the Person of Jesus Christ. Or again, think of the time when the apostles journeyed forth beyond the narrow bounds of Palestine to carry their saving message to the greater heathen world. What was the power that inspired them and impelled them? What

was the force which enabled these men—rude peasants, for the most part, and in no way heroes—to encounter the wise, to do battle with the strong, to rejoice in unimaginable labours, to march with bright faces of triumph through the gates of most cruel death? It was certainly no enthusiasm for a law or scheme of doctrine. It was devotion to a Person. It was ardent affection for One who was known and loved. It was the passion for Jesus Christ. And so, yet once again, if you study the later annals of the Church's history, you will find that one Figure is predominant throughout. One Figure through all the centuries stands firm in the midst of His Church, and all the prodigious effects which the Church has wrought in the world must be traced directly to Him and to the faith which He inspires. The character and activities of historical Christianity have been shaped by the personal influence which flows from Jesus Christ.

And as it has been in the past, so is it in the present. Before all else we are called upon to realise that our religion is nothing less than a relation with a Person—with a Person who is alive, who is active, who is present; who loves us unspeakably and demands our love; who is tortured by our sin and delighted by our goodness; who has infinite wisdom to teach, infinite

grace to impart, infinite power to save ; and who puts all these things freely at our service, and only asks that we should come to Him and be blessed. Yes, religion is not a mere set of opinions, but a life in Jesus Christ. "It is of the essence of Christianity," writes Dr. Liddon, "that day by day, hour by hour, the Christian should live in conscious, felt, sustained relationship to the ever-living Author of his creed and of his life. Christianity is non-existent apart from Christ."<sup>1</sup>

But already, here at the outset, we are met by a counter tendency of modern thought, which may indeed be deplored, but which cannot be ignored. A great theological movement challenges our attention—a movement, which in Germany and Switzerland is carrying all before it, and which is steadily gaining ground both in America and Great Britain. It is a vigorous, spreading movement. It is a scientific movement. It is also a popular movement. For although it is led by theologians and scholars, it is supported by thousands who have little or no pretensions to exact or extensive knowledge. The motto of this movement is, *Christianity without Christology*. "Give us," men say, "religion unmixed with dogma. Show us simply

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Liddon *Bampton Lectures on The Divinity of our Lord* p. 127.

the Master as He humanly lived on earth, e'er ever unprovable theories of His Divinity shrouded His Person in a dazzling haze, and hid Him from our eyes. Let us view the Son of Man in His historical environment—the Friend and Redeemer of sinners, the relentless Opponent of religious shams and falsehoods, the profound and soul-stirring Preacher of the fatherly love of God. We reverence Jesus the Teacher, but we reject the Christ of the Church.”

Now in dealing with this phase of modern thought we ought to be strictly just. It is only fair to admit that the emphasis now laid on the Humanity of our Lord may be of service. There is always some danger of our thinking of Jesus Christ in too abstract and formal a manner. There is always a danger of our regarding Him merely as a manifestation of Deity, as the visible expression of eternal laws and principles, and forgetting the necessary, complementary truth, that He is perfectly human also, one with us—no bloodless, cold abstraction, but a real and living Person, who can enter sympathetically into our experiences, and to whom we can open our hearts as to One of our kin. If the modern portrait of a distinctively human Jesus serves in the slightest to correct this tendency, if in any degree it makes the Personality of our Lord more vivid and near

and real to us, then it will not, I think, in spite of its many deficiencies, have been executed in vain.

And yet, how utterly, intolerably inadequate is the new evangel! Who is this Figure, rising slowly on the world to-day, attracting the gaze and arresting the thoughts of the present generation? It is not the Christ of the Gospels. It is not the Christ of the Church. It is not the Christ of experience. It is a Christ with whom we are most strangely unfamiliar, and He speaks a message that we hardly recognise. This Jesus of recent theory is a personage of the past. He lived: He did His work: He died. And He shall not return again. Still, in a sense, He lives, in His influence and His thought; as Moses lives, and as Plato lives. But He Himself is dead; as Moses is dead and Plato is dead. A God-filled man, the best of the human race, the loveliest of the lovely, the saintliest of the saintly—but still merely a man, and dead! The Person whom we have adored, for whose coming we have listened, on whose help we have relied, comes to us, speaks to us, strengthens us, blesses us no more. My brothers, if this indeed be the truth of the faith in Jesus, God help us all!

I do not intend, particularly at such a time as



this, and to you who are about to dedicate your all to the service of the Master, to propound any formal argument for our Lord's Divinity. Indeed I somewhat distrust these arguments. I hold with Prof. Du Bose that "Jesus Christ is one of those essential truths that are too great to be proved, like God or Freedom or Immortality."<sup>1</sup> Such truths may be known, indeed, through personal life and experience, but apart from experience they cannot logically be demonstrated. At the same time I do wish to express a most emphatic opinion that the "critical" conclusion of a merely human Christ is, even on critical premises, entirely unwarranted. Let us turn for a few moments to the earliest tradition of our Saviour's life and teaching. Let us glance—it must needs be very hastily—at His character, claim and doctrine as set forth in that tradition. Let us leave on one side, for the present time, the evidence of St. Paul, the witness of St. John, the testimony of the universal Church, the experience of countless individuals within the Church. Let us confine ourselves rigidly to the Synoptic Gospels, or rather to those portions of them in which the character, claim and teaching of our Lord are illustrated. I venture to maintain that these portions by themselves are sufficient to

<sup>1</sup> W. P. Du Bose *The Gospel in the Gospels* p. 207.

discredit the humanitarian hypothesis, and to justify the words of one of our English bishops, when he defines faith in Christ as "such unreserved self-committal as is only possible because faith in Jesus is understood to be faith in God, and union with Jesus union with God."<sup>1</sup>

## I

Take first the Character. As we gaze upon that wondrous Personality that shines out from the Gospels, we are aware of a combination of consummate qualities, each single one of which is faultlessly developed, without excess, without defect, in absolutely perfect measure and proportion. Here is a gentleness without a tinge of weakness: here is a strength that never once degenerates into violence: here is enthusiasm untainted with fanaticism, seriousness without austerity, joyousness without levity, dignity without frigidity, tenderness without partiality. Each beauty, grace and virtue is exhibited unblemished—sparkling and polished as a flawless jewel, beyond criticism or reproach. And further, these singular qualities, embracing as they do the widest contrasts, combine together in a marvellous order and harmony—a balance of perfection, unattained and surely unattainable by human

<sup>1</sup> C. Gore *Bampton Lectures on The Incarnation* p. 1.

strivings. Men, as we know too well by personal experience, are inevitably one-sided. They foster certain qualities at the expense of other qualities. They exaggerate ; they run into extremes ; they specialise in virtue as in everything else ; they are always off the centre and away somewhere on the circumference. But it is not so with Jesus. He, and He alone of men, has accomplished the impossible. With Him alone we find a perfect adjustment, a perfect development, a perfect poise. Not in any respect can we suggest improvement. In the totality of His character, as in the details, there is nothing further that we could desire of Him.

And if we are astonished when we contemplate the positive excellence of our Lord's character, we are not less awestruck when we view it on its negative side. Here is the only Being that has ever lived, in whom the most searching criticism can find no trace of sin—the only Being, admittedly good and indubitably sane, who nevertheless displays from first to last complete unconsciousness of sin. How strange this attitude ! Our human goodness ever begins with penitence : but Jesus never repents. Regret and retraction follow the most well-meaning of our human efforts : but Jesus never regrets. When we approach in prayer our heavenly Father, it is with

pleading for forgiveness : but it is the grand peculiarity of the piety of Jesus that He never on any occasion asks to be forgiven. He never shows the least dissatisfaction with Himself. He is sorry for nothing : He is ashamed of nothing : He is guilty of nothing. The good which He willed that He did. The law which He gave Himself that He fulfilled. With absolute consistency He lived up to His ideal : and yet His ideal was so high that not one saint or hero since His time can claim even for a moment to have attained to it.

How then are we to interpret this exceptional Personality? What account can we put forward of a goodness so unique? Perfection, I would remind you, is not a characteristic of our ordinary humanity. It is no mere natural outcome of the process of evolution. It is a moral miracle ; and as such requires accounting for. Who was this perfect Man? Was He simply a human genius supernaturally graced? Or can it be, just because He was the perfect Man, that therefore He was also something more than man? So we are faced with a problem, of which Christianity offers a solution in the Gospel of the Incarnation.

## II

Let us turn now from the Character to the Claim of Jesus. He comes before us, even in the primitive records, clothed with the majesty of more than human greatness. He makes us feel at once that He is not as other men. Even in His prayers and references to God He sets Himself apart. "Father", He says, "My Father": but never once, uniting with His followers, does He say "Our Father". He towers on a lonely height, claiming supreme control of human lives. The best of goods, the closest ties, the holiest relationships must be sacrificed at His bidding. No one may hesitate to shed his blood if Jesus calls. To be worthy of Him is our chief excellence and blessedness, to be ashamed of Him the pledge of everlasting loss. No man among men, but the Shepherd of men, He summons men to His fold. "Come unto me", He says, "and I will give you rest."

Mark more closely His pretensions. A layman, a simple countryman, a mere provincial, He fears not to challenge comparison with all that His world reveres as eminent. He looks on the kings of the earth, in their wisdom and power and splendour, and He says, "a greater than Solomon is here". He turns to the priests,



the venerable, the anointed, the guardians of Jehovah's sanctuary on the hill of Zion : He is greater than the priests, He claims to be superior to the Temple which they serve. Then He passes to the scribes, men of subtleties and learning ; and them too He sets aside. He is the only Master. His "I say unto you" is weightier than all the decisions of the ancients. To Him, and Him alone, the full knowledge of God is entrusted, and only He is able to impart it unto men. Or lastly, He thinks of the prophets, the flower of Israel's sainthood, with their visions, their fiery eloquence, their thoughts sublime. But what are the prophets to Him ? They are but servants, sent by the Lord of the Vineyard : He is the Son, the Heir of His Father's universal monarchy.

Look yet more closely. See our Lord standing, as it were, upon the pinnacle of the universe. He is above the race of man. He is above the very angels. He is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Beloved, the Son of Man foreseen in Daniel's vision—yet is He not Someone greater even than the Messiah ? He calls Himself "the Son"—an absolute term exactly corresponding with the absolute term "the Father". He dares to speak and act as God Himself. He pardons sin ; He promises the peace of Paradise ; He delivers the

keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. He solemnly affirms that He will sit at God's right hand, and come with clouds of heaven to judge the world, and apportion the final destinies of all mankind. Where in the whole vast range of human literature is there parallel for such language? Only listen as He speaks. "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me". "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away". "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father : and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son". "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

There is nothing, we may admit, of formulated doctrine in these utterances. When carefully examined, they are astonishingly reserved. It is even possible to take each single utterance by itself, and whittle down its value, and give it a simple meaning. Yet the total impression which they altogether produce cannot easily be got rid of. We feel, we cannot but feel, that there is something behind such sayings — something suggested, something latent and implicit, something mysterious which infinitely transcends our

powers of explanation. We listen again, and we wonder. Again we are stirred to questioning. And again Christianity brings its answer to our question, and tells us its beautiful story of God's Son and the Incarnation.

### III

Then lastly, consider Christ's Teaching. How remarkable this is, and how utterly dissimilar from all other men's instructions! The very manner of it startles us as exceptional. In tones of august authority Jesus speaks to men. Somewhat He has to tell, not of traditional or earthly learning, but out of His own unfathomable soul. He needs not to appeal to bygone teachers, to the wisdom of ages stored in a thousand venerated scrolls. Of His own right will He speak, Himself His own authority. Nine and forty times in the fragments of His discourses do we come across the phrase "I say unto you". Strangely dogmatic is He, nor does He deign to argue. He does not, like the rest of us, deduce conclusions in a critical way, by the balancing of opposites, by the building up of evidence, by logical processes, or dialectical skill. His speech is not that of science. It is all directness, living perception, immediate intuition. It is all "verily,

verily". Without a shadow of doubt, without a trace of hesitation, He just shows forth what He knows. All that He says is certain.

Nor is the matter of this teaching less noticeable than the manner. Christ deals with vital subjects—questions which were, and are, and must for ever be the chief concern of man. What is God? What is Duty? What is Character? What is Happiness? Such are His problems. And His answers to all are final. He brings to us truth that is luminous and absolute—truth that is proved to be true by its own self-evidence, by the solemn Amen that it awakens in our souls. No words ever uttered possess in a like degree the power of self-authentication. Here is the very reality, the eternal essence breaking into human sounds. And we can no more doubt or deny the revelation of Jesus, than we can deny the air we breathe, or the sunshine which flashes and glows. On the chaos of the mind, on the darkness of the spirit, He decreed that there should be light: and light there was, such as not all the wickedness and folly of the world has since been able to expel.

Call Him, then, who will, a merely human teacher: but what moralist or philosopher ever has achieved a teaching such as this? Where

can we find a rival for this doctrine, so full of meaning that the studies of twenty centuries have not been able to exhaust it, so simple as to be within the comprehension of a child, so universal that it satisfies the needs of all men and all ages, so true that it commands the prompt assent of every honest heart? Set Plato or Shakespeare, or Confucius, or Mohammed by the side of Jesus, and see how they bear comparison. We greet with deserved applause the fair words of their human wisdom; but we stand in awestruck silence when we hear the words of the very Word.

And thus, it seems to me, we return by the path of criticism to the point from which we started. The critics incessantly bid us go back to the earliest Gospels and the historical Jesus, and we obey their bidding. But when we go back, we find in those primitive records a Christ who in no way puts to shame or contradicts the highest that His Church has thought and taught about Him. Even there, in those ancient memoirs, is the fundamental Fact which lies at the basis of all old or new theologising: even there is the Mystery which for twenty centuries now the Church has been struggling to elucidate in words: even there is a "holy Thing" which

baffles the keenest rationalism of the modern spirit. At the end of our critical examination of those Gospels, when we contemplate the wondrous Personality that is mirrored there, we feel that the richest terms of human value are far too poor to yield an adequate interpretation, and, amazed and overpowered by our sense of the unutterable, we are forced to take up as our own the exclamation of St. Thomas—"My Lord and my God."

My brothers, if your ministry is to have power, if your work is to be effectual, two things are indispensable. The first is that you must yourselves know Jesus. Christianity, remember, is not merely to believe like Christ. It is to believe in Christ. It is to know Christ. It is to know the living and the present Christ, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"; as really among you to-night as He was among the disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem; as active in London in the twentieth century as He was in the villages of Galilee in the first. Do you know this Jesus? That is the vital question. Is Christ to you merely the Christ of the Book? Is He merely the Christ of a religious philosophy? Or is He the Christ of your daily experience—the Christ who dwells with you in darkness, the Christ who triumphs with you in light, the



Christ who bends over you to forgive, the Christ who said to you one day, "Come unto me and I will give you rest", the Christ to whom you came and found rest unto your souls? Is Christ that to you? If so, then your second duty is plain. You must preach Christ. With all the force at your command—by the power of your eloquence, by the beauty of your actions, by the sanctity of your life—you must preach Christ. No other gospel, though delivered by speech of angels, can be a substitute for this. You must show men the living Person. You must bring them to the Saviour who alone can cure their doubt, and heal their sin, and help their weakness, who alone can redeem and enlighten and uplift. You must make them know Christ Jesus. For Jesus, if they but knew Him, is the reality that men are hungering for, and the Gospel of Jesus is the one and only gospel for the human heart.



## SECOND ADDRESS

### THE IDEAL OF CHRIST

#### I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE subject on which I ask you to meditate with me to-day is the Ideal of our Lord. For it seems to me most necessary that we, who give up our lives to doing the Master's work, should start with a clear conception of the end for which we work. What are we aiming at? What are we here to do? What is the final purpose of the individual and of society, of the part and of the whole? What is "the one far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves"? Questions like these imperiously claim attention, for our conduct in large measure depends upon the way in which we answer them. Life is, to a greater extent than many are apt to think, an affair of ideals. And if we are really to live in a useful way, to work good effects in the world, to create good impressions, we must first determine the ultimate good to which we can devote ourselves. Thus

Aristotle in his wisdom recommends that men should imitate archers who shoot at a definite mark. So too St. Paul, using by a coincidence the self-same word, explains the secret of all profitable activity. "I press", he says, "toward the mark."

I invite you, then, very briefly to inquire with me this morning, what is the mark, the ideal, the highest good and blessing that Jesus Christ proposes to us as the goal of life.

Now He called it, you remember, by a suggestive name—the Kingdom, or as the phrase more accurately should be rendered, the *Kingship*, or Rule, of God. He talked of it most often. His first announcement at the beginning of His ministry was, "the Kingdom of God is at hand". His last instructions, during the final forty days, were of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God". And throughout the intermediate period, from the beginning to the end, the Kingdom was ever His favourite theme of discourse. In more than a hundred passages of the Gospels there is reference to it. The mountain-sermon opens with the promise of it: the parables revolve round the idea of it: the prophecies of the end foreshadow it: the model prayer petitions for its coming. Indeed it would be nothing but the simple truth to say that

descriptions of the Kingdom, expositions of its laws, and predictions of its future make up the whole central portion of the earliest recorded teachings of our blessed Saviour.

The Kingdom of God! The phrase is so familiar. It is so endeared to most of us by fond associations. And yet, after all, what is it that we mean by it? Since ever we began to pray at all we have prayed that God's Kingdom might come. We have prayed for it morning and evening, weekday and Sunday, feast-time and fast-time, for years. But what is the subject of these many supplications? What is that thing, or that order of things, whose coming we expect? What is that thing, or that order of things, which Jesus Christ affirms to be our highest good, and to which He bids us dedicate our thoughts and energies?

Well, we search up and down the Gospels, but we find no definition. Our Lord, it seems, did not think well to give a logical definition. He told men that the Kingdom was a thing of surpassing value—the treasure of treasures, and the pearl of greatest price. He told them that it was something of immeasurable gladness. A marriage and a festival, an eating and drinking at the Messianic banquet, a filling of the hungry, are His symbols of that gladness. He said it

was a growing, spreading thing, like seeds and shrubs and leaven in the meal. But He never defined it. The mysteries of the Kingdom are not intended for the merely wise and curious: they can only be revealed to genuinely sympathetic and receptive minds.

But what did Christ mean by the Kingdom of God? The question still confronts us. It presses for an answer. We cannot get away from it without an attempt at an answer. Our Lord, without doubt, meant something very definite, and He meant it very strongly. What was it that He meant?

The point of departure will be found, I believe, in the Jewish idea. For, as Dr. Sanday says, "our Lord, while transcending the current Jewish notions of the time, yet in almost every instance starts from them".<sup>1</sup> And when we look into the subject, we at once become aware that the idea of God's Kingship, of God's Sovereignty over men—of a "theocracy", as Josephus likes to call it—was fundamental in the life and thought of Christ's contemporaries. It was the background of their literature, the motive and goal of their efforts, their permanent inspiration. "Be King over us, thou alone, O Lord!" was the heartfelt daily prayer of every pious Israelite.

<sup>1</sup> W. Sanday *The Life of Christ in recent Research* p. 121.

And while he thus prayed there rose up in his mind an intoxicating vision of national glory and triumph. Jehovah was coming to reign! No more should the brutal Roman or the detested stock of Herod vex and persecute the saints. No more should the plundering tax-collector grind the faces of the poor. No more should the Gentile dogs devour the bread of the Father's children. Jehovah was coming to reign! And then would commence the golden age of Israel's prosperity. All poverty and despair, all suffering and vain longing, all misery and tyranny, would for ever pass away. The earth would be blessed with unimaginable fruitfulness. Man's life would be prolonged a thousand years, and even then the weakness and satiety of age would never come. The patriarchs and holy dead would rise. And God's Messiah would be enthroned in Palestine, amid splendours indescribable in literal speech. Such, roughly, was the hope that enraptured the Israelite as he waited and watched for the Kingdom of God.

And then came Jesus. To such a people, filled with such passionate hopes, such ardent desires and yearnings, Christ came with His proclamation, "the Kingdom of God is at hand". He spoke, you will note, to the Jews as a Jew. He began with their conception. He caught up

the phrase of Daniel, of the Baptist, of the Rabbis: He adopted it and used it. Yet He took it up with a difference and a remarkable shifting of emphasis. For the Kingdom which Christ proclaimed was other than that for which the Jewish patriots were looking. Their eyes were steadily fixed on the accompaniments of the promise—the victories, the coronation glories, the prosperities. But our Lord set on one side these mere external details. In them He was not interested, and of them He would not speak. What did absorb him utterly, flooding His soul to the brim with an awful joy, was the thought that the Kingdom was *God's*; that it meant the reign of God Himself, the presence of God Himself, communion with God. That was the stable centre of the everchanging picture—God, the living God reigning with absolute sovereignty over living men. That was the essence of the various representations. That was the thing that mattered. The coming of the Kingdom was the coming of the eternal God. To seek the Kingdom, therefore, was to seek to be one with God: to enter the Kingdom was to begin to be one with God: the spread of the Kingdom was the deepening and extension of the Divine and human oneness: the blessings of the Kingdom were the consequences of that oneness: and the consummation of the



Kingdom would be reached when that ideal should be realised for which our Lord Himself in the Fourth Gospel prays—"Thou in Me, and I in Thee, and they in Us."

*The Kingdom of God—the Rule of God—God ruling human souls.* It is a simple equation. And here, if I mistake not, stripped of its characteristic Jewish form and phraseology, we find the very kernel of our Lord's ideal. The conception which He strove to imprint upon the mind was not any Jewish phantasy of sensuous beatitude. It was not St. Augustine's notion of the universal Church. It was not the thought, so dear to the Reformers, of the beautiful, shining city, the Jerusalem of heaven, the wall of which is jasper and the street of which is gold. No, the highest good that Christ descried for men was nothing less absolute than God Himself, ruling and reigning over loyal hearts, loving and loved by them, working His will through them, and dowering them with all the infinite, saving blessings, which His perpetual presence carries and imparts. To see God, to be called in the fullest possible sense the children of God, to have our soul's hunger satisfied in God, to become at one with God in heart and will—that is the end. That is what Jesus calls eternal life. It is God's Kingdom come.



But further, if this explanation be right—if the Kingdom of God be really that state in which God Himself is present and exercises rule—then we can see how it is that the Kingdom of God, as conceived by our Lord, is at once a present reality and a promise of the future. It is a fact, and also a hope. It is “this-worldly”, and also “other-worldly”. It is ; yet ever it is going to be. For, on the one hand, just in so far as the rule of God is already acknowledged in the present life, just in so far as we welcome it and submit to it, just in so far as the Spirit of God is dominant in the soul and governs its activities, the Kingdom of God is come. “The Kingdom of God”, cries the Master in tones that thrill, “is in the midst of you. It is come upon you. The tax-gatherers and sinners enter into it. The violent are taking it by force. Enter ye in—ye also—by the narrow gate”. Wherever, then, God manifests Himself as the prevailing Power, even there is the Kingdom found. It was revealed to the Jews when Jesus did His mighty works and cast out devils. It is revealed to us to-day in the Church of Christ, which, although it is not co-extensive with the Kingdom, and cannot therefore be identified with it, yet does in a very real, if still imperfect form, embody and exhibit it before the eyes of men. Yes, the

Kingdom of God is actually here. Already the seed is springing to the harvest. The mustard-bush expands. The leaven penetrates the meal. In the bosom of the earth, in the history of the race, a Divine force is working ; and life that is now is gradually broadening into life eternal.

And yet it is equally true that the Kingdom is still of the future. In its plenitude and consummation it is still far off. How rarely do we attain that untroubled communion and intimacy with God, which is the Kingdom in the soul ! How rarely are human affairs directed and arranged in conscious, glad obedience to the holy will of God, which is the Kingdom in the world ! How rarely is the Reign of God declared in daily life—in the private business and the public duty, in the house and on the highway, in companionship of laughter and in secrecy of sorrow, in the dawn of youth and strength and when evening shadows woo a tired age to sleep ! Needs must we gaze into the future when we pray, “Thy Kingdom come.” We must wait in expectation for the promised day, when men of childlike minds, who do the Father’s will, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven : when the King shall command the elect on His right hand, “inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” : when “many shall come from

the east and the west" and "sit down" with the righteous patriarchs in the heavenly festival: when they that are pure in heart shall enjoy the full vision of God.

But if we wait, it is at least with all the confidence of hope assured. For we know that, soon or late, the Kingdom—the perfect Kingdom—certainly will come. We may not understand, indeed, the mysteries of its coming. Sometimes Christ speaks to us of a natural development, of a process of evolution under ordinary laws and amid ordinary conditions—"first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." At other times again, like the Jewish apocalyptists, He speaks of supernatural happenings in connexion with its establishment—of a sudden world-catastrophe, of a violent dissolution of the existing order, of an irruption into the present of a new and glorious future, of a transformation of the earth, and of old things passed away. There is much in such language that is beyond our comprehension. Yet amid the mysterious details we seem to grasp a truth—that some day God will come to men in a unique and final way, not partially or for a moment, but to abide with them fully for ever. With display of miraculous might He will enter human life. He will supply its deficiencies.

He will increase its sufficiencies. He will take away its sin. He will endow it with supernatural gifts and powers and energies. He will transform it for His own. And then with God's will governing all human wills, and God's love calling out all human love, and God's thought shaping every human thought, the ideal of our Lord will be realised, and the Kingdom of God, in its final perfection, will come.

*The Kingdom of God—the Rule of God—God ruling.* Remembering this equation, let us ask next what must be our relation to the Kingdom, and what our duties in respect of it. Now one thing, to begin with, is absolutely clear. The Kingdom is God's gift—God's gift of Himself—to men. "It is your Father's good pleasure", says our Lord, "to give you the Kingdom". He likens it, you recollect, to a treasure that is found, to a seed that grows up of itself, to an inheritance that is prepared. It is something from above which has to be received, but which cannot properly be achieved. There is no question at all of our producing the Kingdom, or causing it to come by our feeble, human efforts. How could efforts of ours bring about the presence of God, the indwelling of the Spirit, eternal life in the soul? The very idea, when

once we grasp it, is preposterous. "Be still", says the Psalmist, "and know that I am God". And perhaps in these days, when so much is written and said on the duty of Christian endeavour, this lesson also should be emphasised. There is a place for relaxation in the higher life as well as for intentness, for passivity as well as for activity. And it is best of all sometimes to give our little agitated self a rest, to cease our feverish striving, to simply lie within our Father's hand, and leave without reserve our destinies to His care.

But this is not the end of the matter. On a closer view, we find that we are not by any means dispensed from effort. For although we certainly cannot create or produce the Kingdom; yet we may and we must make ready for its coming—continually make ready for its ever greater coming. The Kingdom, indeed, comes secretly of itself, but it only can come when, by our human operation, a way for it is prepared. And so the old prophetic cry rings through the ages with an unexhausted meaning:—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God". Prepare! Prepare! Make ready the way! It was the voice of Isaiah. It was the voice of John the Baptist. It is the voice of Jesus.

And how shall we, ordained, as we are, to be the ministers of the Kingdom, make ready the Kingdom's way?

Well, before all else, I think, we should look to our own selves. "Physician, heal thyself" is an admirable adage, which has its parallels in the literature of many nations. We cannot reform the world while we are unreformed ourselves. We cannot be messengers with power till we have felt the power of our message. Let us begin by preparing for the Kingdom in ourselves.

And this individual preparation involves, it seems to me, a threefold discipline. In the first place, there is the discipline of Repentance. You remember, do you not, the terms of our Lord's own message? "The Kingdom of God is at hand", He proclaimed; "repent". First change your habit of mind. Reform your standard of values. Take a new attitude. Break with this world and turn with all your soul to God. "Seek first the Kingdom of God". Ask yourselves seriously whether God and His Kingdom are the possessions you most long for. There are some, it is to be feared, who set most store upon the prizes of the Kingdom—the seats in the throne-room on the right and on the left, ecclesiastical place, a repute for zeal or sanctity,



the form of power. Are you too hoping for these prizes of the Kingdom, or do you really want the Kingdom itself? Make sure of this point, to begin with : turn, change your mind, repent.

The second element in this personal preparation is the discipline of Faith. "The Kingdom of God is at hand", said our Lord ; "believe in the gospel". Trust God, He seems to say. "Have faith in God". Put reliance on His promises. Be receptive. Cultivate the childlike spirit of receptive trust, without which no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. If you open your hearts to God, God will open His heart to you. If you receive Him gladly, He will receive you gladly. The only thing He asks of you is that you make Him welcome.

And then lastly, besides the discipline of Repentance and the discipline of Faith, there is the discipline of Suffering. The way of the Kingdom is always the way of the cross, and our Lord does not conceal the fact. To you, as to the first disciples, He comes with the call to suffer. "Follow me", He says. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me". "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". "If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off". "Who-soever he be of you that renounceth not all that

he hath, he cannot be my disciple". So He commands : and those who desire to attain His gracious promises must be content to take His way. They must partake of His cup and be baptised with His baptism. For it is thus alone—by communion with Him in self-denial and suffering—that they are made worthy to drink the new wine with Him in His Father's Kingdom, and to enter as faithful servants into the joy of their Lord.

So far we have been dealing only with the personal preparation. But it is ours particularly, as the ministers of the Kingdom, to prepare, not our own souls only, but the world, for its reception. We should take a broad view of our responsibility in this matter. "Ye are the salt of the earth", says our Lord. "Ye are the light of the world". Our work is not a little paltry work, to be done in a corner. It is not accomplished when we have secured our own salvation, or warned a few solitary pilgrims to flee from the City of Destruction. Our work is a world-work, and involves nothing less than the regeneration of the world, and the transfiguration of the existing social order. Let me quote you an eloquent passage in which Bishop Westcott summarises this ideal. "What we look for, work for, pray

for, as believers, is a nation where class shall be bound to class by the fullest participation in the treasure of the one life : where the members of each group of workers shall find in their work the development of their character and the consecration of their powers : where the highest ambition of men shall be to be leaders of their own class, so using their special powers without waste and following the common traditions to noble issues : where each citizen shall know, and be strengthened by the knowledge, that he labours not for himself only, nor for his family, nor for his country, but for God.”<sup>1</sup>

It is your task, then, my brothers, to prepare for the coming of God into the world, to make ready the way for the establishment of His Sovereignty. You are, as it were, the generals of an army, sent to rescue some country from the dominion of hostile powers, and restore it to your King. To you belongs, in virtue of your calling, the right of religious leadership. To you is entrusted the high responsibility of ordering the battle, of rallying the forces, of carrying the banner of Him you serve to victory. It is yours to impose once more upon the consciences of men the laws of righteousness. Your opportunities are great. You come into personal contact

<sup>1</sup> B. F. Westcott *The Incarnation and Common Life* p. 82.

with all classes of the community. You meet them in their most solemn hours, their most impressionable moments. You appeal to the deepest part of their human nature—not to their interests merely, or to their passions, but to their heart and soul. And you address them as from God. See to it, then, that you be not unfaithful in your ministry. For if God does not dwell with men in the fulness of His power, if His Kingdom is imperfectly and partially established, if mighty tracts and provinces of life lie wholly outside His influence, if His will is not done in earth as it is in heaven—whose, think you, is the fault? Others, no doubt, may share the shame and blame: but the heaviest censure must inevitably fall on the negligence, indifference and worldliness of the Christian clergy.

*The Kingdom of God—the Rule of God—God ruling.* Once more, and for the last time, I repeat the formula. Here is our Lord's ideal both for the race and the individual—the ideal of society, towards which, whether consciously or not, all reformers are striving, the ideal of conscious existence to which all saints aspire. And this ideal in its essence, as I trust I have now made clear, is simply God Himself, pervading with His presence the whole of human life, ruling

all, directing all, filling all, conditioning all that belongs to human life. And in the attainment of that ideal is the perfection of human blessedness. "The Kingdom of God", says St. Augustine, "is our good : this must we seek, and this must we make the final end of everything we do". May all our future life lead up to this. May every work and duty, each effort of action and thought, each hope, each prayer, each ministerial office, serve in some small degree to make ready God's way, and open out some avenue for the Divine in-coming. And so by our faithfulness may we hasten on the day when the cry of the great voices shall be heard in heaven—"the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

### THIRD ADDRESS

## THE IDEAL OF CHRIST

### II. THE FATHERHOOD, THE CHILDHOOD, THE BROTHERHOOD

**I**N my address this morning I ventured to speak to you of the Ideal of our Lord Jesus Christ. I said that the name of this ideal is "the Kingdom of God", and I expressed an opinion that the meaning of the name may be summarised in the formula, "the Kingdom of God—the Rule of God—God ruling". In other words I interpreted the ideal of Christ to be just God Himself eternally present in all human hearts, and supremely regnant in all human lives. So much, perhaps, is clear. But if I were to stop short at this point, my description of our Lord's ideal would be exceedingly inadequate. For many might accept, and indeed have accepted, the ideal of the Rule of God, without in the least understanding what the Rule of God implies. I propose this evening, therefore, to develop what has been said about the Rule of God, by en-



deavouring, so far as I am able, to suggest an answer to the following three questions :—

First, what, according to the teaching of our Lord, is the character and nature of the God who rules?

Secondly, what must be the relationship of the ruled to the Ruler?

And thirdly, what must be the relationship of the ruled to one another?

To put it otherwise, I desire to fill in the conception of the Kingdom or Rule of God with the help of the three connected ideas of the Fatherhood, the Childhood and the Brotherhood, as they are set forth in the Gospels. And by this means, I trust, we shall be enabled to penetrate more deeply than we have hitherto done the inner secret of the ideal of Jesus.

## I

First, then, let us ask, What is the nature of the God who rules? This, I need scarcely say, has been the everlasting riddle of the universe. What is God? What is the great Reality at the back of all existence? What is the primal Fact, on which all other facts depend? The men of every age, of course, have had their dreams of God. The Greek with his educated taste for art,

his passion for order and harmony, his keen susceptibility to pleasure and enjoyment, pictured the Deity as the Beautiful and Happy, dwelling in bliss afar from man's discomfiture. The sturdy Roman, sprung from a line of mighty conquerors and jurists, figured God rather as a code-giving Imperator, the eternal archetype of Force and Law. The Hebrew sat at the feet of Moses and the prophets and learned to conceive of God as the consummately Righteous—the moral Sovereign, Taskmaster, and Judge. And modern thinkers too, each in his own peculiar way, have made their guesses at the problem. Thus Hegel speaks to us of "the Absolute Idea"; Schopenhauer of "Will"; Matthew Arnold of a "Power not ourselves, which makes for righteousness"; Herbert Spencer of "an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed". And yet, after all these ventures in the way of explanation, the ancient riddle still, apart from Jesus, gets no answer: and still the unenlightened human reason echoes the old confession of the heathen poet—"the more I think of God, He is ever the more unknown to me."

Now our Lord did not undertake to philosophise about God. He never put forth a logical argument for His existence, or an abstract exposition of His nature or His attributes. It was

not in the least His purpose to enable men by reason to comprehend the Incomprehensible. What He did undertake, however—by His life even more than by His teaching—was to reveal God to the heart. The tiny child, that nestles happily at its mother's breast, cannot reason about motherhood, but it knows the mother. And man, though he cannot by subtleties plumb the abysses of Deity, may know at least, through Jesus, all that God is to him. He may come into contact with God. He may be conscious of Him as a Person. He may feel that around and beneath him are the strong, sustaining arms of an eternal Father.

Father ! That is our Lord's distinctive name for God. And here, in this beautiful word, we strike at once the grand original key-note of our Lord's theology. It may, no doubt, be true, as Max Müller has somewhere asserted, that there is no religion, of which we have adequate record, that does not in some sense or other apply the name of Father to its Deity. In Homer, and in Plato, and again in Seneca ; in the ancient religious literature of India ; in the Jewish writings both before and after Christ, the Father-name is found. "Our Father in heaven" was, as scholars have shown, a common expression among our Lord's contemporaries. And yet

it is equally true that Jesus employed the term with a force and in a manner that is quite unparalleled. With others it was but one of many names for God; with Him it was *the* name—the principal, almost the exclusive name. With others it expressed but one of many attributes of God; with Him it stood for the total sum of all God's attributes. With others it was little more than a mere casual metaphor; with Him it was the one supreme reality of religion. "Father", in short, expressed for our Lord the very essence of God—His nature, substance, character, and inmost being. And that essence, that character, that inmost being, is simply Love. For to say that God is Father is but a concrete way of saying that God is Love. He is our Father, not as the Greek surmised because He gave us life, not as the Roman thought because He governs us, not as the Jew believed because He made a covenant with Israel, but just because He loves us. It is His nature to love. His perfection consists in His love. He is capable of nothing else than love. He is Love in Himself, Love infinite and absolute, Love that loves all things and particularly all that can appreciate and return His love. "God", says the disciple who entered most deeply into the teaching of his Master, "is Love".

Such, then, is our Lord's description of the Deity. The God who rules, He said, is the God who loves. And He took His stand upon this fact of the Father-love as the ultimate truth of all existence and all life. He looked with calmness on the universe around Him. He marked its heights and depths, its forms and colours, its motions and combinations, its ever-changing, strange phantasmagoria of appearance. He looked at life in all its various gradations—in flowers, and birds, and animals, and in the consciousness of man. And through all this and behind all this He saw at work a Power, which is not merely a thinking Power, not merely a creative Power, but a love-Power, the end of whose thought and energy is only love. That for our Lord is the very root-truth of the universe. The one reality at the back of all appearance, which underlies all processes and principles and laws, is a perfect Love, pouring itself out through all the avenues of creation brooding over all, bearing with all, giving itself to all who will receive the gift—the boundless, unquenchable love of the infinite Father.

Take this, then, as the first point. Take it, I beg you, into your minds, and into your preaching, and into your lives. And never forget, or let others with whom you have to do forget, that

the God who rules is always, and through all, and first of all "our Father".

## II

But secondly, if this be so, a consequence must follow. The idea of God as Love cannot lie barren, a mere notion for the intellect. It turns into a motive. It becomes an inspiration. It provides a new dynamic. It influences life. For if God be Love, then man must be also love, and man will be at his highest when he is most like God in love. If God be Father, man must be His child, and man will be at his highest when he is most God's child. Thus the truth of the Fatherhood involves the truth of the Childhood; and the realisation of the child-relationship becomes the highest ideal of man.

And here we seem to find the line of answer to the second question that we started with, namely, What should be the relationship of the ruled to the God who rules? The ideal relationship, Jesus answers, is the relationship of love. It is the attitude of a good and unspoilt child that is responsive to his father. It is sonship in its highest mood of loving self-abandonment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."



Now what are we to say of such a view of religion? Well, on the one hand, this view must necessarily exclude all idea of a legal contract. Religion is not the performance of certain acts: it is the living of a life. It is not a correct attitude, but a loving heart: not slavish task-work, but a filial spirit. Our Lord, as you know, was continually protesting against formality in religion. What though the fasts are kept, and the alms are given, and the prayers are said? What though the Father's will is outwardly obeyed? What though a good appearance is most rigorously kept up? All acts are futile, if not done with love. Thus our Lord could say in the manner of the ancient prophets, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice". He could exalt the needs of men above the claims of the Sabbath. He could set reconciliation with one's brother before the service of the altar. Viewing the whole body of devout observances, He could say that these indeed must be done, but there are "weightier matters" which must not be left undone. He abolished mere legalities, mere compliances, mere formalities, and left in their place only sacraments of love—channels through which the child-life communes with the Parent-life, means by which the human love goes out towards and appropriates the Love Divine.

But if, on the one hand, our Lord condemns a religion of mere formality and legality, He does not, on the other hand, commend that kind of mysticism which, expelling all human loves and human uses, would withdraw men from the world, to be absorbed in God alone. This "mysticism of abstraction" (as it is called) has often, it is true, been panegyrised by saintly men and women, as the perfection of Christian piety. "It seems", writes one, for example, "that our Lord desires that we should separate ourselves from everything, that so His Majesty may draw us nearer to Himself". Yet I cannot find anything in the utterances of our Saviour that sanctions such a view. He did not remove His disciples from the world of daily life. He never once called them away to that profound and boundless solitude, where the soul is rapt in forgetfulness of the earth and time and space, and dwells, as the Neo-Platonic mystics used to say, "alone with the Alone". He bade men ever fix their hearts on God. He bade them do all that they do with the constant thought of God. He bade them live their lives as in the presence of God, with the upward look towards God, in loving trust of God. But He nowhere described their relation to God as absorption in God alone.

Then what, to be exact, is the perfect religion

—the perfect relationship of man to God—as expounded by our Saviour? So far as I understand it, it is wonderfully simple. It is just the life of the child in the presence of his Father—in the presence of a Father who is known and who is loved. Religion, in a word, is the childlike spirit actualised. Our Lord, as you may have noticed, gives exceedingly few instructions as to our deportment towards God. He simply tells us, in everything that we do, to remember our heavenly Father. Thus our worship must ever be in spirit and in truth because it is worship of the Father. We must fast and give alms in simplicity because the Father sees. We must forgive because our Father forgives. We must let our light shine before men that they may glorify our Father. We must seek to be perfect because our Father is perfection. In the sunshine of life each joy should become more joyous through the presence of our Father, and should utter itself in praise, “I thank thee, O Father”. But if suffering comes—if resources fail, and health departs, and death robs us of our friends—we should still see in the sorrow but our Father’s cup, and learn to pray, “Father, not my will, but thine be done”. Repentance, again, should be the coming to the Father—the return to the homeland, and the prodigal’s broken cry, “Father, I have

sinned". Always and above all we must trust our Father. We must never be fretted or anxious. For how should He who feeds the birds, and clothes the lilies, and numbers the hairs of our heads, be careless or forgetful of the wants of His dear children? No hostile power can pluck us out of our Father's hand. And then the spirit of our trust should find a voice in prayer. We must converse with our Father, bring to Him all our difficulties, ask Him for what we need, and be sure that His parental love will send the fitting answer. So in this way all our life should be one long, blessed intercourse, through the Saviour, with our Father. And it is just this intimacy, this interchange of love with love, that is the soul of religion. When duty is done with joy, when prayer becomes communion, when law is recognised as our Father's voice, and character as likeness to our Father's goodness, and existence itself as a partaking of our Father's being—when we live and feel and act as the real children of our Father—then, as the phrase goes, we have got religion. For, after all, the truth of the religious experience is measured, not by great works achieved, or by ceremonies performed, or by sensations felt, but by the love and the peace that abide in the heart that can pray "My Father!"

## III

But the teaching of our Lord about the Father-love of God carries a further consequence, and helps us towards an answer to the third question that we raised, namely, What must be the relationship of the ruled to one another? For if God be the Father of all, whom all are bound to love, then it follows that all are brethren, and must love one another for their Father's sake. Just as the truth of the Fatherhood involves the truth of the Childhood, so the truth of the Childhood logically involves the truth of the Brotherhood. And when once it is realised that all of us are brethren and the members of one family, the duty of universal love becomes self-evident. Thus goodwill towards humanity is the logical and inevitable consequence of the loyal recognition of God's Father-love to all.

Love, then, goodwill, real brotherly interest and kindness, is to govern all the relations of each child of God to his fellows. It is to be the constant, moulding force of all our human intercourse—always present, always ready, always active, adapting itself to occasions, taking such different forms as may be required in different circumstances. To the needy, for example, love will express itself as eager liberality.

It will give to those who ask, without inquiring grudgingly how much they can repay ; it will not turn aside from them that seek to know. It will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, tend the sick, and earn the mercy promised to the merciful. To the offending brother love will come as rare consideration, forgiving private injuries until seventy times seven, rebuking public wrongs with a discriminating tenderness, refraining from carrying criticism, not hypocritically anxious to set the other right. To the offended brother it will show itself as zeal to make amends, that leaves its sacrifice even at the foot of the altar, that it may not lose a moment in effecting a reconciliation. To constituted authority love will be manifested as respect. It will pay the temple-tax. It will render to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's. It will give to all men all that is their due, not even omitting such small courtesies as salutations. To the friend, again, love appears in the guise of a sweet humility and serviceableness, that takes the lowest place, and washes the dust-stained feet, and constitutes itself the universal minister. To the enemy it takes the form of readiness to give way—nay more, of heroic willingness to promote his welfare to the utmost extent of its own powers and resources. For the persecutor, lastly, it is forgiving prayer,



that is all the more fervent the more bitter his malignity. Such are the modes and periphrases of love. In itself it is the bent of the soul to help and bless ; all the forces of our nature in a condition of imparting, or at any rate of willing, benefit to every creature. It is no sentimental affection, but a practical self-devotion, in great things and in little things, that takes as its example the self-sacrifice of the Crucified, and strives, so far as it is able, to live up to His command : " Love one another ", not merely as you love yourselves, but " as I have loved you ".

Here, then, is Christ's own summary of human duty. Our Lord requires that we should treat each man, no matter who he be, as a brother-child of our Father, that we should feel his joys and sorrows just as though they were our own, that we should meet his wants and wishes even before they are expressed, that we should place ourselves wholly in will and in deed at the service of his interests, not as giving reward or expecting reward in return, but with brotherly devotedness. And this was His plan for the reconstruction of society. Our Lord never promulgated any social programme. He gave hardly any rules which bear directly and in detail on the social and political problems, that engage our attention to-day. He would not waste His strength on

any surface reformatations—righting a wrong here, attacking an abuse there. What he sought to reform was not the manners, but the heart. He hoped to convert, as it were, the soul of the social organism, by converting the souls of the individuals that compose it. Let each member of society exchange his selfishness for love; let him learn to think less of his rights and more of his duties; let him feel that all the other members are indeed his brethren, whom he is in duty bound to treat as such: let him once do this, and the social results will follow soon enough. This was our Lord's method. "His work", writes Paul Wernle, "was to awaken the individual to love, and to make the individual realise his responsibility towards his brother. And thus Jesus did a work which beyond all others was for eternity. And still to-day He calls us back from the distracting maze of programmes and panacæas for the reform of the world, to the reform of our own selves, which is the reform that is chiefly needed."<sup>1</sup>

St. Jerome relates a touching story how that St. John in his extreme old age used to be carried by his disciples into the church at Ephesus, and at each assembly he was wont to utter nothing more than this: "Dear children, love one an-

<sup>1</sup> P. Wernle *The Beginnings of Christianity* vol i. p 82.

other". At last the brethren, tired of hearing the same thing, asked him, "Master, why do you always say this?" And the reply of the Apostle was, "Because it is the Lord's command: and this by itself, if done, is enough".<sup>1</sup>

We have seen, then, have we not? that the Gospel preached by Jesus is the Gospel of the Fatherhood, the Childhood, and the Brotherhood, and of the Love which is the essence and the explanation of all three. And I think that we are able now to fill in, to some extent, the outline sketched this morning of our Lord's ideal. We said that this ideal was the Kingdom or Rule of God—God Himself ruling over human hearts. Let us add now that this Kingdom or Rule of God is the Kingdom or Rule of an infinite Love—the heavenly Father reigning over children, who, for their part, love the Father, and love one another for the Father's sake. Yes, the ideal of Jesus is the ideal of Love's supremacy. It means duty in perfection, and the perfection of duty is love. It means character in perfection, and the perfection of character is love. It means religion in perfection, and the perfect religion is love. It means the eternal Love Himself taking possession of all human souls and filling them

<sup>1</sup> Jerome on Gal. vi. 10.

with love, restoring them to His own image and that image is love, imparting to them His own nature and that nature is love. It means a universe, the spirit and law and principle of which is God, and therefore Love.

And it is this ideal, my brothers, that you must manifest to the world. Your principal business in life is to preach and practise Christian Love. You are sent among men, among troubles, among difficulties, you are sent amid struggle and warfare, and the reason that you are sent is that you may proclaim, both by word and deed, the power and the comfort and the excellence of Love. That is your Gospel. The Fatherhood, the Childhood, the Brotherhood—that is your message. And the world, I think, is waiting to be conquered by that message. For the world can be drawn by love. If you try to subdue men's hearts by authority and force—whether by ecclesiastical authority or by secular authority—you undoubtedly will fail. But while force can be shattered by a greater force, the greatest force of all must break itself upon love. Give yourselves wholly, then, to the ministry of love. Be faithful to the highest. Let your teaching and your life be a teaching and life of love. And believe that in God's good time both the teaching and the life shall for love's sake be made perfect.

#### FOURTH ADDRESS

### THE METHODS OF CHRIST AS TEACHER

**I**N this my last address I propose to speak to you a little about the methods of our Lord as Teacher. The subject is, of course, from every point of view most interesting. To trace out some of the ways in which our Lord's mind came into touch with other minds, the modes in which it related itself to them, the means by which it attracted and subdued them, cannot be other than a fascinating study, and one of the highest importance both for the psychologist and the educationist, for the historian and the theologian. In selecting this topic for my address to-day, however, I have in view less intellectual pleasure or instruction than practical utility. I look around me, and I see a body of men who are all on the eve of undertaking a life-work of religious teaching. I turn to the Gospels, and I find portrayed there One who—whatever more we may believe Him to have been—was, at

the very least, by far the greatest Teacher of religion that the world has seen. And then I ask myself, May not the disciples learn somewhat from the Master, not only from His matter, but also from His manner? May they not, watching Him, glean some suggestions which may help them to teach with a little of His power? I cannot but suspect that even in these changed times, and amid our modern conditions, the methods employed by the Teacher of Galilee will still prove to be the best, the most serviceable and effectual, for the twentieth-century ministry.

I wish, then, to call your attention to one or two, perhaps rather obvious, points in our Saviour's method. But first let me utter just a word of caution. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the example and pattern of all religious teachers. Yet at the same time He can be imitated only within certain bounds and limitations. The authority of His teaching, its astonishing originality, its depth, its purity, its perennial freshness, its sublimity, its divinity—to all this we cannot aspire. And the reason is that these inimitable qualities are the outflow and resultant of an inimitable Personality. The teaching is unique because the knowledge which lies behind it is unique, and the knowledge is unique because it is knowledge possessed by a Person who is



unique. I do not go into the question of the extent of our Lord's self-limiting in respect of His knowledge. But I assume that because Jesus Christ was God made Man, therefore He knew as we who are only men can never know, and therefore He taught as we who are only men can never teach.

We must recognise, then, at the outset, that there is much in our Saviour's teaching that is beyond our human capacities. There remain, however, certain principles and characteristics of His method, on which, I think, we may meditate with profit. The most conspicuous of these imitable characteristics I will sum up in five words. The teaching of our Lord was popular. It was practical. It was positive. It was pregnant. It was personal. Let us employ ourselves this morning in considering more in detail what these epithets may mean.

# I

To begin with, as I said, the teaching of our Lord was pre-eminently *popular*. It was addressed to the people, in the language of the people, for the needs of the people. Nothing can be conceived less abstruse, less academic. Yet most of the world's great thinkers have been difficult in their manner. There is a story that

Plato once announced a lecture on "the Good", and an enormous crowd collected to hear what he had to say. But the philosopher plunged into an enigmatic discourse on arithmetic and geometry and astronomy, defending the hypothesis that the One is the Good, till the majority of his audience left the lecture-room in despair. Now the method of our Lord was the antithesis of this. He spoke directly, luminously, sympathetically, to the common people. His first care was to be understood. He put Himself on their level, varied and repeated His utterances, and used the simplest language. In all kinds of ways He sought to help them to apprehension. Thus He would sum up the thoughts, which had been treated in His teaching, in pointed, proverb-like sayings, which might linger in the memory and give food for meditation. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you". "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath". "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it". "It is more blessed to give than to receive". Such aphorisms are jewels that can easily be treasured up. Or again, since abstract terms are apt to be confusing to uncultivated minds, our Lord used almost exclusively concrete expressions. Instead of general ideas He gave men special instances; instead of

notions, pictures. For example, He did not speak in an abstract way about the Love of God, but He portrayed a father running forth with joy to meet a returning prodigal: He did not speak about the Providence of God, but He said "the very hairs of your head are all numbered": He did not speak of human influence for good, but He said "ye are the salt of the earth": He did not discuss the importance of right motives, but He said "be not as the hypocrites", and pointed to special instances of hypocritical display in almsgiving, prayer and fasting. It is all exceedingly vivid and pictorial. Indeed, throughout the discourses it is the picture that everywhere dominates. Continually Christ appeals to the imagination of His hearers by illustrations drawn from nature or from man's daily life. The seed, the grass, the tares amid the wheat, the good tree with the good fruit, the lilies, the shifting sands; and again the sower and reaper, the shepherd with his flock, the labourers standing idle in the market-place, the widow complaining to the corrupt official, the children at their games, the strong man armed keeping his palace—such are the forms in which He clothes His wondrous thoughts. The weakest intellect can grasp them. We are not surprised that, His method being what it was, the common people heard Christ gladly.

And here, I think, is the first lesson that we may learn from the teaching of Jesus. Effective teaching, all the world over—in London no less than in Capernaum, among Englishmen no less than among Jews—must be popular teaching. It must be plain. It must be intelligible. It must be closely in touch with the everyday life and the everyday thoughts of the people. It must keep within the circle of familiar interests. By subtleties and abstractions you may appeal, perhaps, to the intellect of the cultured few, but you will never get anywhere near to the soul of the many. And therefore it is better, as a rule, to leave subtleties alone, and cultivate in their stead lucidity and simplicity. Be concrete. Be vital. Be resolute to make your meaning felt and understood. Do not be afraid of being topical and modern. Speak to the men of your time in the same arresting manner in which our Lord spoke to the men of His time. And remember that the object of your teaching is not to display your learning or win praise and approbation, but to bring truth home to men and touch the soul.

## II

In the second place, the teaching of our Lord was *practical*. In all that He said His aim was to work some effect on life and on character.

Thus He did not, at any rate primarily, appeal to the intellectual faculties. He did not begin with a philosophy or theology. He was concerned, not so much with the explanation of true ideas, as with the inculcation of right actions : and such ideas as did not, or could not, have any effect on action, He was wont to pass over in silence. We must all, I should think, have been struck by the fact that our Lord consistently refrained from ever attempting to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity. Take for example His teaching about evil. He said a good deal about the presence of evil in the world. He showed men how they ought to interpret it, to resist it, to overcome it. But He never touched the problem of the origin of evil, nor did he make a prediction as to its ultimate abolition. On the subject of the future life, again, He is equally reserved. He bears witness against the Sadducees to the fact of a future life ; He affirms its spirituality ; but He gives no details as to mode and circumstance. So, too, in respect of the angels. There can scarcely be a doubt that

our Lord, in His teaching, referred to a ministry of angels, and assumed a belief in angels on the part of His disciples. Yet He never expounded any doctrine of the angels, and never discussed their attributes or nature. On all such questions, that have no practical bearing, He said little or nothing. "An abstract truth", writes one, "which exists only in the realm of pure intellect has apparently for Jesus Christ no interest; it certainly has no place in His teaching. The only Christianity which Jesus Christ inculcated was applied Christianity".<sup>1</sup>

Our Lord appealed, then, primarily to the will, to the faculty of free decision. What He sought to impart was not a logic of doctrine or a theory of life, but right habits, right character, right principles of action. And this surely should be the method of our own religious teaching. The Christian teacher, if he models himself on our Lord, has primarily to do with character. He must lift up the ideal of character. He must point out the constituents of character. He must labour at the construction of character. And this does not mean, of course, that his teaching must be purely ethical. Our Lord's teaching was as far as possible from being purely ethical. But it does mean that, in everything he says, he must

<sup>1</sup> Lyman Abbott *The Christian Ministry* p. 265.



keep, like our Lord, a practical object in view. Let him tell out the truths that he knows in every way he can, but let him always present these truths in their practical applications. Let him speak of the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, but let him show men what the doctrine of the Trinity signifies *for them*. Or, let him speak of the doctrine of the Incarnation, but let him show men what the Incarnation signifies *for them*. Or, let him speak of the doctrines of the Atonement or the Holy Spirit or the Church, but let him show men what these doctrines signify *for them*, what bearing they have upon the building-up of character, what influence they should exercise upon conduct and upon life. It is only by some such process of application that these or any other doctrines can be inwardly appropriated; and it is only when they are thus appropriated, thus inwrought into life and action, that the fullness of their meaning can rightly be understood. The man who does the will, says Jesus, shall know of the teaching. *πρᾶξις ἐπὶ βασις θεωρίας.*

### III

Then thirdly, the teaching of our Lord was *positive*. It was not His principal object to indicate what is wrong; it was His principal object to indicate what is right. His efforts were

directed, not towards telling men what they were *not* to think and *not* to do, but towards telling them what they *were* to think and *were* to do. And in this respect the method of our Lord contrasts rather noticeably with that of the Jewish teachers. The Law and even the Prophets speak continually in the negative. Eight-tenths of the Decalogue consist of prohibitions. But the "thou shalt not" of Judaism becomes "thou shalt" in the system of Christianity. Hillel said, "What thou wouldst not have another do to thee, do not thou to another". Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them".

The positive quality in the teaching of our Lord comes out very strikingly in His relation to the thought of His time. Nothing in His wisdom, as Dr. Latham says,<sup>1</sup> is more impressive than His exceeding moderation in regard to error. The Jews had many wrong notions, Christ's own disciples had many wrong notions, and had them right up to the end : but how rarely did Christ attack them ! How cautious He was about the pulling up of tares, lest haply in the doing of it the good grain should be damaged ! How tender He was towards mistaken ideas, provided that they did not blind men to the perception of the

<sup>1</sup> H. Latham *Pastor Pastorum* p 208.

true! He would not roughly revolutionise the faith of Israel, or disturb existing landmarks unnecessarily. "I came not to destroy", He said, "but to fulfil". He came not to pull down but to build up: not to confute mistaken or foolish conceptions, but to implant ideas that were right, sure that in time the right would of themselves expel the others.

And so again, with reference to the practice of His time, our Lord's attitude is positive. "His judgments," it has been said, "concern themselves, not so much with things done which should not have been done, as with things left undone which should have been done".<sup>1</sup> He rarely denounced abuses. He did not preach scathing sermons on the evils of slavery or gambling or prostitution. He did not fulminate against poverty or injustice. His method was rather to communicate to mankind such a spirit of positive righteousness as should render the perpetration of wrong no longer possible. "His way", writes Dr. Bruce, "was not that of reform but of regeneration, not of judgment but of mercy, not of impatience and intolerance and rupture, but of quiet, silent influence, leading slowly but surely to the new creation, bringing it in noiselessly, gradually, like the dawn of day."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. G. Peabody *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character* p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Bruce *The Kingdom of God* p. 84.

I cannot but think that one of the reasons why our ministry is so often less productive than it ought to be is our neglect to pay due attention to this positive method of Jesus. We are far too fond of criticism. Someone proposes some view which we honestly hold to be wrong—but why should we weary all hearers with our proofs that it is wrong? Someone does something to provoke our disapproval—but why should we go to the housetops to proclaim our disapproval? These negations and prohibitions do not help men upward. They open out no prospects. They stimulate no growth. Even if they are successful—and they rarely are successful—in rooting out an evil, they put nothing in its place. They just leave life where it is. A man might obey all the precepts of abstention, he might think nothing wrong, and say nothing wrong, and do nothing wrong, and yet be an empty-headed, foolish-tongued, unprofitable Christian. Yes, what the men of our age, and indeed of every age, require is less criticism than guidance. Leave controversy, as far as you possibly can, to professional controversialists, and devote your whole energies to the propagation of the truth. For truth will vanquish falsehood, if you give it time: but until men know the truth and feel it in their souls, not all the arts of persuasion, neither reasoning nor rhetoric, will convict them of their error.

## IV

The fourth characteristic of the teaching of our Lord is *pregnancy*. Our Lord did not give His disciples systematic expositions after the manner of the Christian Schoolmen, nor did He offer them collections of maxims after the fashion of the Jewish Rabbis. He taught in large measure by suggestion, by "the stimulus of half-disclosures"; and He looked for intelligent co-operation on the part of those that heard Him. "The utterances that fell from Him," says Justin Martyr, "were brief and concise, for He was no sophist, but His word was the power of God."<sup>1</sup>

Our Lord's intention, in fact, was to teach men to think for themselves. He would not release them from the duty and responsibility of using their own intelligence. He would not provide them with a code or list of rules which would serve them in any way as a substitute for thinking. The thoughts He gave them were "seed-thoughts"—not maxims to be remembered but ideas to be developed, not precepts but a principle, not sanctions but a spirit. "The words that I have spoken unto you," He said, "are spirit and are life." His teaching is thus suggestive rather than declarative. He stimulates men to think, now by some startling paradox that on the

<sup>1</sup> Justin *Apol.* i. 14.

face of it is unpractical, now by the semi-revelation of a parable, now by some searching, apt interrogation. Everywhere He encourages them to form opinions of their own—to solve their own problems, to face their own difficulties, to answer their own questions. A lawyer comes to Him and asks, "Who is my neighbour?" Our Lord tells the story of the good Samaritan and then repeats the question, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers?" It is the lawyer that has to answer. A young man comes with a question as to what he must do to inherit eternal life. He addresses Christ as "Good Master": and at once Jesus catches him up. "Why callest thou me good?" He says. "Think out what goodness means", He seems to say, "and you will know what you have to do to inherit eternal life." It is everywhere the same. Our Lord deliberately refrained from making His revelation too full, and too plain, and too explicit. Always He left something over that men must do for themselves. He showed men the direction in which they ought to travel, but He would not accompany them each step along the road.

Now I suppose we are all agreed that nothing can be more theoretically absurd or more practically disastrous than a teaching of religion that is



not based on dogma. If the Christian religion is really more than a conventional name for a general moral attitude, it implies the acceptance of definite principles—definite beliefs for the intellect, definite laws of conduct. And those who undertake to be the teachers of this religion are not at liberty, in any degree whatever, to refine away this definiteness. We may not soften down the clear statements of the Creed ; nor may we tamper with the principles of conduct proclaimed by our Lord in the Gospels and confirmed by the Church. At the same time, this being said, I think that the example of our Lord Himself should warn us against that excessive and too peremptory dogmatism which has its *ex cathedra* answer ready for every question, which pronounces where Christ and His apostles are silent, which dominates rather than directs, which demands from men passive obedience instead of intelligence and enlightened co-operation. It is the greatest mistake in the world to try and fashion men as a potter fashions clay. We are bound to provide for growth, for personality, for conviction. And we shall follow our Master best if we endeavour, not to impose truth violently from without, but to foster the native growth, to encourage the developing personality, and to help the increasing conviction to assurance and

maturity. "A teacher", says a thoughtful writer, "has done nothing, unless he awakens the mind to independent activity. As long as it is merely passive, receiving what is poured into it but doing nothing more, true education has not commenced."<sup>1</sup>

## V

Then lastly, the teaching of our Lord was pre-eminently *personal*. He had, of course, to deal with multitudes of men. Sometimes He spoke to thousands. Wherever He went He seems to have been pressed by thronging crowds. And His heart went out towards these mighty congregations, and He gladly helped and taught them. And yet His chief interest always was with individuals. The bulk of His teaching was concerned with personal life, and was occasioned by the special needs of persons. A great part of His time was spent in personal interviews. Some of His deepest sayings were spoken to single persons—to a nervous Pharisee who came to Him by night, to a dull Samaritan woman drawing water at a well. The best treasures of His wisdom were lavished upon twelve fishermen. The personal note, indeed, is characteristic of His ministry. Christ applied Himself first to persons. He gave Himself wholly to them—healing them one at a time, speaking to each the

<sup>1</sup> J. Stalker *Imago Christi* p. 269.

necessary word, bestowing the minutest care on every special case. It is quite extraordinary. Christ came to redeem the world and save the race, and His method of doing so was the training and influencing and educating of individuals.

Our method too often is different. We fix our hopes on numbers. We measure our success by the size of our congregations. We believe in mass-movements, in public opinion, in organisation, and we are slow to appreciate the importance of the person. No doubt, we are interested in this or that great person—in the artist, statesman, general, scholar, prince, administrator: but we are criminally indifferent to the little, common person—to the city clerk, to the out-of-work, to the woman absorbed in the cares of a household, to the shopkeeper. We do not intensely feel—perhaps we do not feel at all—that the soul of but one of these is of more value than a continent, and that to help one such soul to realise its possibilities is a work that is fully worth the labour of a lifetime. Our eyes are on the multitudes that throng the streets, and we overlook the person. Then let us learn from Jesus one more lesson. The majority of us, I suppose, will never have power to influence great masses. We shall never have men and women hanging on our utterance. We shall never take the lead in any widespread movement. Our names will

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